

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

KIMBERLY HANSON,)	
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	CIVIL ACTION
vs.)	
)	FILE No. 4:23-CV-00192
SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD.,)	
)	
Defendant.)	

COMPLAINT

COMES NOW, KIMBERLY HANSON, by and through the undersigned counsel, and files this, her Complaint against Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12181 *et seq.* (“ADA”) and the ADA’s Accessibility Guidelines, 28 C.F.R. Part 36 (“ADAAG”). In support thereof, Plaintiff respectfully shows this Court as follows:

JURISDICTION

1. This Court has original jurisdiction over the action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343 for Plaintiff’s claims pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12181 *et seq.*, based upon Defendant’s SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., failure to remove physical barriers to access and violations of Title III of the ADA.

PARTIES

2. Plaintiff KIMBERLY HANSON (hereinafter “Plaintiff”) is and has been at all times relevant to the instant matter, a natural person residing in Dallas, Texas (Denton County).

3. Plaintiff is disabled as defined by the ADA.

4. Plaintiff is required to traverse in a wheelchair and is substantially limited in

performing one or more major life activities, including but not limited to: walking and standing

5. Plaintiff uses a wheelchair for mobility purposes.

6. In addition to being a customer of the public accommodation on the Property, Plaintiff is also an independent advocate for the rights of similarly situated disabled persons and is a “tester” for the purpose of enforcing Plaintiff’s civil rights, monitoring, determining and ensuring whether places of public accommodation are in compliance with the ADA. Her motivation to return to a location, in part, stems from a desire to utilize ADA litigation to make Plaintiff’s community more accessible for Plaintiff and others; and pledges to do whatever is necessary to demonstrate the plausibility of Plaintiff returning to the Property once the barriers to access identified in this Complaint are removed in order to strengthen the already existing standing to confer jurisdiction upon this Court so an injunction can be issued correcting the numerous ADA violations on this property. (“Advocacy Purposes”).

7. Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD. (hereinafter “SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD.”) is a Texas limited company that transacts business in the State of Texas and within this judicial district.

8. Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., may be properly served with process via its registered agent for service, to wit: c/o Seabreeze Property Company, Registered Agent, 3311 Oak Lawn Avenue, Suite 250, Dallas, TX 75219.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

9. On or about February 9, 2023, Plaintiff was a customer at “Sushi Motto,” a business located at 2430 S Interstate 35E, Denton, TX 76205, referenced herein as “Sushi Motto”. See photo of Plaintiff’s receipt attached as Exhibit 1. See photo of Plaintiff at the Property attached as Exhibit 2.

10. Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., is the owner or co-owner of the real properties and improvements that Sushi Motto is situated upon and that is the subject of this action, referenced herein as the “Property.”

11. Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., as property owner, is responsible for complying with the ADA for both the exterior portions and interior portions of the Property. Even if there is a lease between Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., and a tenant allocating responsibilities for ADA compliance within the unit the tenant operates, that lease is only between the property owner and the tenant and does not abrogate the Defendant’s requirement to comply with the ADA for the entire Property it owns, including the interior portions of the Property which are public accommodations. *See* 28 CFR § 36.201(b).

12. Plaintiff’s access to the stores located at 2430 S Interstate 35E, Denton, TX 76205, Denton County Property Appraiser’s property identification number 128441 (“the Property”), and/or full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, foods, drinks, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations offered therein were denied and/or limited because of her disabilities, and she will be denied and/or limited in the future unless and until Defendant is compelled to remove the physical barriers to access and correct the ADA violations that exist at the Property, including those set forth in this Complaint.

13. Plaintiff lives 19 miles from the Property.

14. In addition to revisiting Sushi Motto as a customer, Plaintiff desires to return to the Property to enjoy Lonestar Popcorn and RG Burgers and Grill for their old-fashioned burgers.

15. Plaintiff has visited the Property once before as an advocate for the disabled. Plaintiff intends on revisiting the Property within six months after the barriers to access detailed

in this Complaint are removed and the Property are accessible again. The purpose of the revisit is to be a return customer, to determine if and when the Property are made accessible and for Advocacy Purposes.

16. Plaintiff intends on revisiting the Property to purchase goods and/or services as a return customer as well as for Advocacy Purposes but does not intend to re-expose herself to the ongoing barriers to access and engage in a futile gesture of visiting the public accommodation known to Plaintiff to have numerous and continuing barriers to access.

17. Plaintiff travelled to the Property as a customer and as an independent advocate for the disabled twice, personally encountered many barriers to access at the Property that are detailed in this Complaint, engaged many barriers, suffered legal harm and legal injury, and will continue to suffer such harm and injury if all of the illegal barriers to access present at the Property identified in this Complaint are not removed.

18. Although Plaintiff did not personally encounter each and every barrier to access identified in Plaintiff's Complaint, Plaintiff became aware of all identified barriers prior to filing the Complaint and because Plaintiff intends on revisiting the Property as a customer and advocate for the disabled within six months or sooner after the barriers to access are removed, it is likely that despite not actually encountering a particular barrier to access on one visit, Plaintiff may encounter a different barrier to access identified in the complaint in a subsequent visit as, for example, one accessible parking space may not be available and she would need to use an alternative accessible parking space in the future on her subsequent visit. As such, all barriers to access identified in the Complaint must be removed in order to ensure Plaintiff will not be exposed to barriers to access and legally protected injury on a future visit.

19. Plaintiff's inability to fully access the Property and the stores within in a safe

manner and in a manner which inhibits the free and equal enjoyment of the goods and services offered at the Property, both now and into the foreseeable future, constitutes an injury in fact as recognized by Congress and is historically viewed by Federal Courts as an injury in fact.

COUNT I
VIOLATIONS OF THE ADA AND ADAAG

20. On July 26, 1990, Congress enacted the Americans with Disabilities Act 42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.*

21. Congress found, among other things, that:

- (i) some 43,000,000 Americans have one or more physical or mental disabilities, and this number is increasing as the population as a whole is growing older;
- (ii) historically, society has tended to isolate and segregate individuals with disabilities, and, despite some improvements, such forms of discrimination against individuals with disabilities continue to be a serious and pervasive social problem;
- (iii) discrimination against individuals with disabilities persists in such critical areas as employment, housing public accommodations, education, transportation, communication, recreation, institutionalization, health services, voting, and access to public services;
- (iv) individuals with disabilities continually encounter various forms of discrimination, including outright intentional exclusion, the discriminatory effects of architectural, transportation, and communication barriers, overprotective rules and policies, failure to make modifications to existing facilities and practices, exclusionary qualification standards and criteria, segregation, and relegation to lesser service, programs, activities, benefits, jobs, or other opportunities; and
- (v) the continuing existence of unfair and unnecessary discrimination and prejudice denies people with disabilities the opportunity to compete on an equal basis and to pursue those opportunities for which our free society is justifiably famous, and costs the United States billions of dollars in unnecessary expenses resulting from dependency and non-productivity.

42 U.S.C. § 12101(a)(1) - (3), (5) and (9).

22. Congress explicitly stated that the purpose of the ADA was to:
- (i) provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities;
 - (ii) provide a clear, strong, consistent, enforceable standards addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities; and

* * * * *

- (iv) invoke the sweep of congressional authority, including the power to enforce the fourteenth amendment and to regulate commerce, in order to address the major areas of discrimination faced day-to-day by people with disabilities.

42 U.S.C. § 12101(b)(1)(2) and (4).

23. The congressional legislation provided places of public accommodation one and a half years from the enactment of the ADA to implement its requirements.

24. The effective date of Title III of the ADA was January 26, 1992 (or January 26, 1993 if a defendant has 10 or fewer employees and gross receipts of \$500,000 or less). 42 U.S.C. § 12181; 28 C.F.R. § 36.508(a).

25. The Property is a public accommodation and service establishment.

26. Pursuant to the mandates of 42 U.S.C. § 12134(a), on July 26, 1991, the Department of Justice and Office of Attorney General promulgated federal regulations to implement the requirements of the ADA. 28 C.F.R. Part 36.

27. Public accommodations were required to conform to these regulations by January 26, 1992 (or by January 26, 1993 if a defendant has 10 or fewer employees and gross receipts of \$500,000 or less). 42 U.S.C. § 12181 *et seq.*; 28 C.F.R. § 36.508(a).

28. The Property must be, but is not, in compliance with the ADA and ADAAG.

29. Plaintiff has attempted to, and has to the extent possible, accessed the Property in her capacity as a customer at the Property and as an independent advocate for the disabled, but

could not fully do so because of her disabilities resulting from the physical barriers to access, dangerous conditions and ADA violations that exist at the Property that preclude and/or limit her access to the Property and/or the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations offered therein, including those barriers, conditions and ADA violations more specifically set forth in this Complaint.

30. Plaintiff intends to visit the Property again as a customer and as an independent advocate for the disabled, in order to utilize all of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations commonly offered at the Property, but will be unable to fully do so because of her disability and the physical barriers to access, dangerous conditions and ADA violations that exist at the Property that preclude and/or limit her access to the Property and/or the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations offered therein, including those barriers, conditions and ADA violations more specifically set forth in this Complaint.

31. Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., has discriminated against Plaintiff (and others with disabilities) by denying her access to, and full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations of the Property, as prohibited by, and by failing to remove architectural barriers as required by, 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv).

32. Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., will continue to discriminate against Plaintiff and others with disabilities unless and until Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., is compelled to remove all physical barriers that exist at the Property, including those specifically set forth herein, and make the Property accessible to and usable by Plaintiff and other persons with disabilities.

33. A specific list of unlawful physical barriers, dangerous conditions and ADA violations which Plaintiff experienced, observed or subsequently made aware of that precluded and/or limited Plaintiff's access to the Property and the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and accommodations of the Property include, but are not limited to:

ACCESSIBLE ELEMENTS:

- i. In front of Unit 182, there is a vertical rise at the base of the accessible ramp (the ramp with white handrails) that is approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch, in violation of Sections 303.2 and 405.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to access public features of the Property when using this accessible ramp as vertical rises on ramps are particularly dangerous as the surface of the ramp is already at a significant slope which increases the likelihood of the wheelchair to tip over due to the vertical rise.
- ii. In front of Unit 182, the accessible ramp (the ramp with white handrails) has a cross slope steeper than 1:48 towards the top of the ramp, in violation of Section 405.3 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access exposes Plaintiff to increased danger of tipping over as a cross-slope in excess of 1:48 is dangerous, and this excessive cross-slope is made even more dangerous given the fact it is on a sloped surface of a ramp.
- iii. In front of Unit 182, the access aisle to the accessible parking space is not level due to the presence of an accessible ramp in the access aisle in violation of Section 502.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make

it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to exit and enter their vehicle while parked at the Property as the lift from the van may rest upon the ramp and create an unlevel surface.

- iv. In front of Unit 182, the accessible curb ramp is improperly protruding into the access aisle of the accessible parking space in violation of Section 406.5 of the 2010 ADAAG Standards. This barrier to access would make it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to exit and enter their vehicle while parked at the Property as the lift from the van may rest upon the ramp and create an unlevel surface.
- v. In front of Unit 152, one of the two accessible parking spaces is missing an identification sign in violation of Section 502.6 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it difficult for Plaintiff to locate an accessible parking space.
- vi. In front of Unit 152, the accessible parking space is not level due to the presence of an accessible ramp in the accessible parking space in violation of Section 502.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to exit and enter their vehicle while parked at the Property as the van may rest upon the ramp and create an unlevel surface for Plaintiff to exit and enter their vehicle. Moreover, when the vehicle parks in this space, the vehicle blocks the accessible route to the ramp.
- vii. In front of Unit 152, the accessible curb ramp is improperly protruding into the accessible parking space in violation of Section 406.5 of the 2010 ADAAG Standards. This barrier to access would make it difficult and dangerous for Plaintiff to exit/enter their vehicle.

- viii. In front of Unit 152, the accessible parking space has a cross slope in excess of 1:48 in violation of Section 502.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards and is not level. This barrier to access would make it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to enter and exit the vehicle as a level surface is needed so the wheelchair does not tip over and injure Plaintiff as excessive cross-slopes increases the likelihood of Plaintiff's wheelchair tipping over on its side and injuring Plaintiff.
- ix. In front of Unit 152, the Property has an accessible ramp leading from the accessible parking space access aisle to the accessible entrances with a slope exceeding 1:12 at the top, in violation of Section 405.2 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to access the units of the Property because when ramps are too steep (more than 1:12) it requires too much physical arm strain to wheel up the ramp and increases the likelihood of the wheelchair falling backwards and Plaintiff being injured.
- x. In front of Unit 152, due to an gap in the pavement revealing an opening of about an inch along the entire length, the ground surfaces of the access aisle have vertical rises in excess of $\frac{1}{4}$ (one quarter) inch in height, are not stable or slip resistant, have broken or unstable surfaces or otherwise fail to comply with Sections 502.4, 302 and 303 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to access the units of the Property.
- xi. In front of Unit 151, due to the presence of a column, the landing at the top of the accessible ramp (with white handrails) does not have 36 (thirty-six) inch clear

space in violation of Section 406.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it difficult and dangerous for Plaintiff to access the Property.

- xii. In front of Unit 140, the access aisle to the accessible parking space is not level due to the presence of an accessible ramp in the access aisle in violation of Section 502.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to exit and enter their vehicle while parked at the Property as the lift from the van may rest upon the ramp and create an unlevel surface.
- xiii. In front of Unit 140, accessible curb ramp is improperly protruding into the access aisle of the accessible parking space in violation of Section 406.5 of the 2010 ADAAG Standards. This barrier to access would make it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to exit and enter their vehicle while parked at the Property as the lift from the van may rest upon the ramp and create an unlevel surface.
- xiv. In front of Unit 140, the accessible parking space is missing an identification sign in violation of Section 502.6 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it difficult for Plaintiff to locate an accessible parking space.
- xv. In front of Unit 140, the accessible ramp side flares have a slope in excess of 1:10 in violation of Section 406.3 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to access the units of the Property because steep slopes on ramp side flares could cause the wheelchair to tip over and injure Plaintiff.

- xvi. In front of Unit 140, the access aisle is not marked to dissuade parking in it, in violation of Section 502.3.3 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it difficult for Plaintiff to leave a vehicle when parked in this accessible parking space as it is probable a vehicle may be parked in the access aisle due to the encouragement of parking there.
- xvii. Adjacent to Any Holiday Realtors, the two accessible parking spaces and associated access aisle have a running slope in excess of 1:48 in violation of Section 502.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards and are not level. This barrier to access would make it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to exit and enter their vehicle while parked at the Property as Plaintiff's wheelchair may roll down the slope while entering or exiting the vehicle.
- xviii. In front of Unit 102, one of the two accessible parking spaces is missing an identification sign in violation of Section 502.6 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it difficult for Plaintiff to locate an accessible parking space.
- xix. In front of Unit 102, the access aisle to the accessible parking spaces has a vertical rise in excess of ¼ inch in height in violation of section 502.4 of the 2010 ADAAG Standards. This barrier to access could cause Plaintiff's wheelchair to get stuck or tip over.
- xx. Inside Sushi Motto, there are serving counters that do not provide a portion of the main counter at or lower than 34 (thirty-four) inches, in violation of Section 308.3.2 of the ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it difficult for Plaintiff to properly transact business at the Property.

- xxi. Defendant fails to adhere to a policy, practice and procedure to ensure that all facilities are readily accessible to and usable by disabled individuals.

SUSHI MOTTO RESTROOMS

- xxii. The restroom lacks signage in compliance with Sections 216.8 and 703 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it difficult for Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to locate accessible restroom facilities.
- xxiii. The door locking hardware providing access to the restrooms requires tight grasping and twisting of the wrist in violation of Section 404.2.7 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it difficult for Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to utilize the restroom facilities.
- xxiv. Restrooms have a sink with inadequate knee and toe clearance in violation of Section 306 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it difficult for Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to utilize the restroom sink as Plaintiff is seated in a wheelchair and, when seated, Plaintiff's feet and legs protrude out in front. In order to properly utilize a sink, Plaintiff's legs must be able to be underneath the surface of the sink, but due to the improper configuration of the sink, there is no room underneath for Plaintiff's legs and feet.
- xxv. The height of the bottom edge of the reflective surface of the mirror in the bathroom is above the 40 inch maximum height permitted by Section 603.3 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it difficult for the Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to properly utilize the mirror in the

restroom since Plaintiff is sitting in a wheelchair and is lower than a person standing up.

- xxvi. The actionable mechanism of the paper towel dispenser in the restroom is located outside the maximum prescribed vertical reach range of 48 inches above the finished floor as set forth in Section 308.2.1 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This barrier to access would make it difficult for Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to reach the actionable mechanism of the paper towel dispenser as individuals in wheelchairs are seated and have significantly less reach range than individuals who stand up.
- xxvii. The restrooms have grab bars adjacent to the commode which are not in compliance with Section 604.5 of the 2010 ADAAG standards as the rear bar is not 36 inches in length. This barrier to access would make it difficult for Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to safely transfer from the wheelchair to the toilet and back to the wheelchair.
- xxviii. The restrooms have grab bars adjacent to the commode which are not in compliance with Section 604.5.2 of the 2010 ADAAG standards as the rear bar does not properly extend at least 24 inches from the centerline of the toilet. This barrier to access would make it difficult for Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to safely transfer from the wheelchair to the toilet and back to the wheelchair.
- xxix. Defendant has a policy of storing items in front of the rear grab bar of the accessible toilet so that the grab bar no longer complies with the 1 1/2 inch

spacing requirement set forth in Section 609.3 of the 2010 ADAAG Standards.

This barrier to access would make it difficult for Plaintiff and other individuals with disabilities to utilize the accessible toilet safely as the grab bars are blocked and/or impeded by the objects placed on or about the grab bars by Defendant.

34. The violations enumerated above may not be a complete list of the barriers, conditions or violations encountered by Plaintiff and/or which exist at the Property.

35. Plaintiff requires an inspection of the Property in order to determine all of the discriminatory conditions present at the Property in violation of the ADA.

36. The removal of the physical barriers, dangerous conditions and ADA violations alleged herein is readily achievable and can be accomplished and carried out without significant difficulty or expense. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv); 42 U.S.C. § 12181(9); 28 C.F.R. § 36.304.

37. All of the violations alleged herein are readily achievable to modify to bring the Property into compliance with the ADA.

38. Upon information and good faith belief, the removal of the physical barriers and dangerous conditions present at the Property is readily achievable because the nature and cost of the modifications are relatively low.

39. Upon information and good faith belief, the removal of the physical barriers and dangerous conditions present at the Property is readily achievable because Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., has the financial resources to make the necessary modifications since the Property is valued at \$9,519,133.00 according to the Property Appraiser website.

40. The removal of the physical barriers and dangerous conditions present at the Property is also readily achievable because Defendant has available to it a \$5,000.00 tax credit

and up to a \$15,000.00 tax deduction available from the IRS for spending money on accessibility modifications.

41. Upon information and good faith belief, the Property have been altered since 2010.

42. In instances where the 2010 ADAAG standards do not apply, the 1991 ADAAG standards apply, and all of the alleged violations set forth herein can be modified to comply with the 1991 ADAAG standards.

43. Plaintiff is without adequate remedy at law, is suffering irreparable harm, and reasonably anticipates that she will continue to suffer irreparable harm unless and until Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., is required to remove the physical barriers, dangerous conditions and ADA violations that exist at the Property, including those alleged herein.

44. Plaintiff's requested relief serves the public interest.

45. The benefit to Plaintiff and the public of the relief outweighs any resulting detriment to Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD.

46. Plaintiff's counsel is entitled to recover its reasonable attorney's fees and costs of litigation from Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§ 12188 and 12205.

47. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12188(a), this Court is provided authority to grant injunctive relief to Plaintiff, including the issuance of an Order directing Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., to modify the Property to the extent required by the ADA.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays as follows:

- (a) That the Court find Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., in violation of the ADA and ADAAG;
- (b) That the Court issue a permanent injunction enjoining Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., from continuing their discriminatory practices;
- (c) That the Court issue an Order requiring Defendant, SOUTHRIDGE PARTNERS, LTD., to (i) remove the physical barriers to access and (ii) alter the subject Property to make it readily accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities to the extent required by the ADA;
- (d) That the Court award Plaintiff her reasonable attorneys' fees, litigation expenses and costs; and
- (e) That the Court grant such further relief as deemed just and equitable in light of the circumstances.

Dated: March 9, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

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